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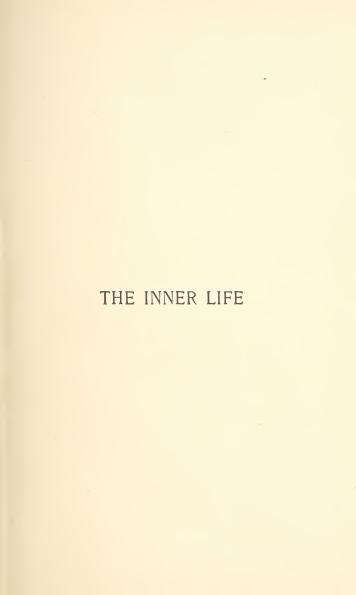
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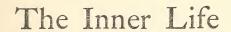
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.











A Study in Christian Experience

Bishop John H. Vincent



United Society of Christian Endeavor Boston and Chicago 56420

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rice.—Joseph Roux.—Thomas à Kempis. XXVII. This Inner Life True to Human Nature.

How Promote the True Inner Life?

Prelude.



HE true "inner life" is the life of the spirit; and it is the life of the Holy Spirit within the human spirit.

Whatsoever good is found in the heart of man—from the first throb of protest against evil to the fullest witness of indwelling peace and power—is because of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit of God.

"The dispensation of the Father" is followed by "the dispensation of the Son" and consummated and crowned by "the

dispensation of the Holy Spirit."

"These things have I spoken unto you while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."— JESUS in John 14: 25, 26, R. V.

"That ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; . . . that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God."—PAUL in Eph. 3: 16-19, R. v.

The Inner Life:

A Study in Christian Experience.

I.

NDER a cloudy sky a landscape of mountain and plain stretches toward a dark and stormy sea. From far away inland a river s, having its source among the mountains broadening as it passes through the

flows, having its source among the mountains, broadening as it passes through the plain, and entering the sea not far from yonder bold headland on which stands an ancient lighthouse. Ranges of mountains, but for the clouds that crown them to-day, would define the horizon line on the one side, while on the other the sea is lost in a veil of mist. One hears the roar of great breakers upon the shore, and now and then sees at the base of the high promontory the dashing of the spray against its rocky front. When night comes on and the darkness deepens, the

headland and the sea are lost to sight, but one hears the wild roar of the waters and at intervals catches a glimpse of the sharp light from the high tower that crowns the headland.

Standing upon a slight eminence in the centre of this dark landscape is a solitary man, who, before the night falls, in thoughtful mood sweeps with his eye the limited horizon, sees the low foot-hills belonging to the mountain range, the valley, the plain, the surface of the river, the bold outjutting promontory, and hears the moaning of the waters at the bar as the great stream becomes a part of the greater sea. He lingers till the darkness of night closes in about him. He listens to the roar of the ocean, the sweep of the wind, the restless murmur of the passing river, his face once in a while touched with the light from the great revolving lantern on the lighthouse. One might detect on that face a fixed expression of mingled sadness, awe, and alarm. If one were to catch the words he speaks in his

soliloguy, uttered in that solemn and depressing darkness, he might hear a comparison between the life of the man himself and the landscape on which he looked,-the hidden heaven, the mountain solitude made doubly desolate by the impending clouds, and the vast waste of the turbulent and complaining sea.

The landscape and the spectator are thus brought before us.

II.



ET us now in thought retire to a well-warmed room in a house yonder among the hills far removed from the sound of the sea;

and, as the same man sits by the flickering light of an open fire, let us by some psychic power look at another landscape, —that on which his own inner eye rests as he recalls the vision of the afternoon and contrasts the warmth and cheer of the open fire with the chill and desolateness of the world on which he gazed a short time before down by the seaside.

Within this man's mind we see the same landscape that spread out before him when he stood in the afternoon and early evening where first we saw him. With him we now see again the uplands, the mountains, the river, the valley, the misty sea, and now and then a flashing light from the lofty lighthouse.

But in this mental picture thus open to our inspection we see somewhat which he did not see before. Some mystic power has added to the picture in his mind, and with him we see a ship drifting out of the darkness toward the shore, and with him we hear the boom of the signal gun from sailors who, fearing a dreadful doom, thus plead for help. The man who sees this, now sitting by the fireside, did not see it in reality as he stood by the shore to-day; but the vision which imagination has added to the picture sends an involuntary shudder through his frame.

TIT.



HE years go by, forty of them, and five thousand miles to the eastward, beyond the sea and across the continent of Europe,

we find our friend again. He sits an idler on a bench in the public park of an Eastern city. He is an old man now. He has closed his eyes in meditation; and we, again, gifted by clairvoyant power, see his thought; and again we behold a vision of sea and shore, river and mountain line, deepening darkness and flashing light. We notice a slight shudder passing through his frame as he recalls the ship drifting to the shore, and hears amidst the boom of breaking waves the call of the ship's gun. Forty years have passed, and five thousand miles of space intervene; but after all this lapse of time and leap of space he looks on the same picture, imagines the same disaster, and feels' the same sadness as memory recalls that impression of sympathy between the melancholy landscape and his more melancholy spirit.

IV.

NE thing that took place within this man's soul that same dark evening forty years ago we did not at that time notice. We did

not know of a fierce conflict between sin and righteousness, a struggle between the generous and the ignoble, the spiritual and the sensual, elements within him. And we did not see the defeat of righteousness in the resolve formed that dreadful night to do a deed against which the voice of the heavens within him entered imperious protest; but to-day, forty years after, as he sits five thousand miles away from the scene of his defeat, a flush comes to his cheek and his lips move as if to confess, deprecate, and denounce his own folly in that past crisis of his life.

In this detailed and double picture observe first of all the persistent continuance of the man's personality. He is the same man. His memory remains. His power of imagination remains. And his moral sense, which asserts itself after

all these years, accentuates his personal responsibility. Time and location, age and circumstances, make no changes. He might still say: "I am I. The choices and the deeds of the long ago and the far away are mine."

V.

ET us notice another singular fact; it is in itself a laboratory experiment. You who have read these pages and have seen this picture

now hold it in your own minds,—this picture of the man by the sea, among the hills, and in a foreign city. And it will be possible for you to recall it many years hence. Indeed, circumstances might easily occur and combine to make it impossible for you ever to forget it. The incident, whether fictitious or historic, is with you, and you can easily believe its fidelity to fact because of the mental phenomena and powers and processes with which you are familiar.

VI.



E have thus been introduced to two worlds: first, that patch of the outward and visible world; and then the reproduc-

tion of it all in the inner world,—the mental picture of the landscape, the tempest, and the strong feeling of response within our souls to the simple account of a struggle and a defeat. And we are ready to believe it all because of some sorrowful experience of our own at some period of our lives.

VII.



O this inner world and to certain phenomena of the inner life we are now to give some attention. It is a world about which we all

know something, and what we know at all we know as certainly as we know the facts of the world of sense. Indeed, we are better acquainted with the former than with the latter. More real to us, indeed, is this world of thought, of feeling, of moral conviction, in which desire burns, guilt trembles, hope aspires, will resolves, and character develops; a world intellectual, æsthetical, ethical, spiritual; a world which sustains an intimate relation to the outer universe, and which in some mysterious way connects us with the invisible and eternal Being, First of all, Source of all, Father of all. This inner world is a world close at hand, the phenomena of which are in the possession of every man. To collect them he need not take a long journey or a short one; he need not look out of his own windows to find the field for scientific research in this department. He has within himself his library and laboratory. He holds the stars as well as the telescope within his own personality. Let us think a little about this "other" world.

VIII.

HE inner world is a world of mystery. We see only patches, limited areas of it at any one time. Fogs settle down and en-

shroud it, shutting out the wider horizon. A thought arrests you. You cannot tell whence it came. You cannot account for the time of its coming, or for the intensity of the feeling it excites. We are all often surprised by the revelations within ourselves, to ourselves, of ourselves. At any moment the experiences of a remote past in our lives may return, and with startling force and vividness. The friend, the brother, the mother, years ago parted from us, sits again at our side, or suddenly leaps into view, smiling with new greeting and then waving a farewell with that "vanished hand" we have missed so long. We have visions of landscapes, Alpine scenery with dizzy depths and lofty heights. Great things and little things come into our minds; thoughts base and thoughts noble; puzzles that knit the brow; trifles that cause the careless smile; majesties and tragedies that instantly and involuntarily express themselves on our features. We leap from theme to theme in a second. We think of self, of the next neighbor, of somebody in India, of the moon, of some remote star, and never wonder at the speed or reach of our thoughts.

IX.

NE recognizes himself as a personality. He says, "I am." He, the person who knows that he is, knows also that there is some-

what besides and beyond himself. He recognizes this other existence, and says, "That also is." The "I" and the "other," the "me" and the "not me," constitute the world of his actual and possible knowledge. As he is sure of himself, the "I," he is sure also of the somewhat outside that also is. In the "other that is" he also finds other "persons," each of whom says, "I am." He says, "I am."

They say, "We are." And he and they say: "Besides us there is somewhat which we know to be, but which is unlike us; somewhat we know, but which we think of as not knowing us and as not being able to know us as we know it." Thus we find two forms of being,—the personal and the non-personal.

The person knows himself. He knows that he is. He knows to some extent the processes of his own activity. This power of self-knowing is consciousness. Thus one comes to know some of the facts and laws of sensation, perception, conception, memory, imagination, volition. He knows something of this inner world. What he sees, however, is like a part of the sea overhung with mist. The remote horizon line is never visible. Clouds and darkness hang about it. It is only a portion of the actual life within that at any one time comes into view.

X.

HIS inner life is ceaselessly active. Even in sleep it may break in dreams upon our consciousness. It moves onward like a stream,

never still, now turbid and rough, now clear and calm, but ever moving, now shining in the light, now passing into darkness like the river Alph in Coleridge's Kubla Khan,

> "Through caverns measureless to man Down to a sunless sea."

This subjective life is like a suspended wire always quivering, a pulse always throbbing, a voice always speaking, a panorama always unfolding. Professor William James speaks of the "insensibly continuous" thought, the changes of which are never absolutely abrupt. He says: "Consciousness does not appear to itself in chopped seas and bits. Such words as 'chain' and 'train' do not describe it fitly. As it presents itself in the first instance, it is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. . . . Let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life."

XI.

E cannot here discuss the scientific explanation of the nature and genesis of this inner life.

We cannot enter into the ques-

tions started by the psychologist and the physiologist. Body and mind must be studied together. Brain and spirit are most intimately connected. It is claimed by a specialist in physiological psychology "that a passage of a cloud over the sun will change the rhythm in breathing and the pulse-rate of a sleeping child; and, if we expose the brain, its whole bulk can be seen to swell when a lamp is approached to a patient's eye." It will be sufficient for our purpose to quote a strong statement of the distinguished psychologist of Harvard University already named in these pages: "All mental states are fol-

lowed by bodily activity of some sort. . . . Although we affirm the coming to pass of thought as a consequence of mechanical laws, . . . we do not in the least explain the nature of thought by affirming this, and in that latter sense our proposition is not materialism. . . . The fact is inexplicable, and the immediate essence of consciousness can never be rationally accounted for by any material cause."

XII.

ET us go one step further in the study of this inner life. Its central power is the choosing, the determining power. Dewey speaks

of it as "connecting and conditioning all mental activity." And this is the will. By the power of the will the soul controls and modifies things, or uses things to get the most out of them and to avoid the greatest measure of possible harm from them. Through the will man tills the soil, plants trees, grows grain, cuts down the native forests, bridges streams, builds walls, tunnels mountains, constructs boats, crosses wide wastes of ocean, resists the influence of uncongenial climate, and performs a variety of acts to protect life, preserve health, secure comfort, and increase his power of achievement.

It is thus out of the heart of man where dwells this power of purpose that all the externals of civilization spring. The marble is hidden in Pentelicus. The bare summit of the Acropolis shines in the sunlight. The soul of the artist dreams and resolves. And lo, the Parthenon that slept in the unopened heart of Pentelicus crowns the lofty heights of the Acropolis. Thus the inner power of the will transforms the outward world. Thought, courage, resolve, and hope overcome external barriers, and according to the measure of a man's ability is his success. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Here is the secret of life within and not without. Therefore "a contented mind is a continual feast." Wealth, luxury, palace, and throne cannot make a successful or a happy life.

XIII.



S we look within, we find another power—the moral sense, the feeling of right and wrong. Professor Ladd calls it "the feeling

of oughtness." Darwin speaks of "that short but imperious word 'ought.'" Thackeray described one as "tingling with the consciousness of having done a good deed"; and we may add, there is also a stinging with the consciousness of having done a wrong deed. This moral judgment is present in all men, in all civilization, among barbarians as well as among the most cultivated. It varies according to the kind and measure of education, but it waits alike upon ignorance and knowledge to utter its mandate and apply its goad.

The voice of moral consciousness may be stifled, but it cannot be wholly silenced. It is persistent in its demands. We may not be able to study the finer processes of psychology and physiology as they bring to us the phenomena of con-

sciousness; we may not always be able to trace the line of separation between the physical reality and the inner sense; but the convictions, feelings, assents, rejections, of the moral nature are clear and positive, so that the unlearned and the pagan as well as the Christian philosopher must concede that there is in every man an arbiter within him, deciding in favor of the right and against the wrong.

Here is the mystery of moral being and responsibility, "the voice of an imperious and besetting God"; what George Washington called "that little spark of celestial fire"; recognized by the pagans of old and by students of man and society everywhere; hinting at the warmth and calm and light of the eternal harmonies, and also suggesting the wrath of righteousness against wrong-doing.

XIV.

IACK of the ethical sense in man is a vast reality. That reality is-Gop!

From whatever source the idea comes to man, -by reason, by traditional remains of earlier revelation, by intuition,—the idea is present everywhere of a great First Cause, who has created and who now governs all things. This great First Cause we must think of as a person. The anthropomorphic conception is inevitable. Man has a sense of personal responsibility, the forward look to an account and a consequence, the sense of moral defect and need, the consciousness of a struggle between himself and a better and higher power not himself, represented within him. And often he has the feeling that this higher power is foreign, yet friendly, to himself. The soul cries out, "O that I knew where I might find him!" but it also exclaims, "Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him." There is in man everywhere an uplook toward the great First Cause, with desire to worship, to conciliate, to appease.

XV.



EN have always in all parts of the world inquired after God. Their search has not been in vain. Ideals embodied in max-

ims, general convictions, intimations, conscience, have all lifted men toward God. One might quote from the sacred writings of all the ages and of all people; and the more this subject is investigated, the more abundant are the proofs that the religious factor is always and everywhere active.

Plutarch said, "If we traverse the world, it is possible to find cities without walls, without letters, without kings, without wealth, without coin, without schools and theatres; but a city without a temple, or that practises not prayer and the like, no one ever saw." From the journal and letters of David Livingstone read

the record of human aspirations among the natives of Africa, sometimes almost suppressed by despair. Hear Sekomi, chief of the Bamangwato tribe, after being seated in deep thought in his hut for some time, he addressed Livingstone, "I wish you would change my heart; for it is proud, proud and angry, always very uneasy, and continually angry with some one."

This thirst for deliverance from selfdiscouragement and failure, this quenchless desire after God, we find everywhere.

This religious sense—the sense of need and helplessness and longing after the great First Cause—is as much a part of man's nature as is his imagination or his will. And yet we may search the skies and the seas, exhaust the resources of this earth in its multitudinous forms of inanimate and animate existence, and find no God. The telescope finds no God. The microscope shows no God. The crucible reveals no God. But within, within, -in the heart, although

as hard as the stone on which Jacob pillowed his head at the beginning of his long pilgrimage to Padan-Aram,—within we may, if we will,—and sometimes, oftentimes whether we will or not,—hear a voice at first inarticulate, that we find to be the voice of God; and we may say with the patriarch, as we awake out of our sleep: "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not... How dreadful is this place! This is no other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

The development of what we call civilization does not diminish the restless longing of the soul after a knowledge of the First Cause. In all civilization the same idea abides. In the higher civilization it is more tenacious than in the lower. It is based upon larger theories and more adequate (always at the best inadequate) conceptions of man and his relation to the First Cause and the character and purpose of that First Cause. The highest and most exalted men and women of every race and of every age

are essentially religious. Mr. Matthew Arnold says, "As all roads lead to Rome, so all questions lead to religion." And he says again, "Religion is the voice of deepest experience"; and Carlyle, "It is well said in every sense that a man's religion is the chief fact with regard to him." Herbert Spencer says, "Religion everywhere present as a weft running through the warp of human history expresses some eternal fact." "Even the most sceptical of men," says John Stuart Mill, "have an inner altar to the Unseen Perfection, while waiting for the true one to be presented to them." We may again quote Herbert Spencer, who is often unjustly spoken of as either atheist or agnostic: "One truth must ever grow clearer—the truth that there is an inscrutable existence everywhere manifest to which he [man] can never find nor conceive either beginning or end. Amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty that he is ever in the presence

of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed."

This "Energy" is the "entity having intellectual and moral quality," and we call him God, and he is the "Unseen Perfection" to which—to whom John Stuart Mill introduces us.

Darwin in 1873 writes, "The impossibility of conceiving that this grand and wondrous universe with our conscious selves arose through chance seems to me the chief argument for the existence of a God;" and in 1879 he again wrote, "In my most extreme fluctuations, I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of a God."

We have a light which we call conscience, which every man in some measure possesses. Byron calls it, "The oracle of God, the vicegerent of God," and Browning, "God's beacon-light"; and Kant says, "My belief in God and in another world is so interwoven with my moral nature that I am as little under apprehension of having the former torn from me as of losing the latter."

Thus it is that the consciousness of morals,—and, indeed, the very consciousness of self—carries with it the capability of being conscious of God. Man sees the world beyond him. He sees the self within him. He may see the God about and above him. Conscience is that signal-bell in the soul which the heavens ring to remind man of obligation, of God, of destiny. If man will not heed the call and put forth the hand of faith, superstition will take the place of truth and possess the inner life. Man must worship. Conscience must speak. The soul cannot live in itself and by itself. It must have something to do with the things of a moral and spiritual realm. Some guest must come in.

God and duty are acknowledged by the pagan philosophers. They express the hope of a better and of a future life. But their hope is mixed with doubt and uncertainty.

The conflict between two natures in man is universal, and everywhere we hear the cry for help, and there is a recognition of a realm invisible whence help may come.

XVI.

N the study of the inner life we find not merely activity within, but in every man a dominating trend of character. He is always thinking,

but he is also always thinking toward one ruling end of life. What a man desires, he thinks about and plans for. The controlling desire determines the direction of all subordinate desires. The creeks all run down toward the river, that they may become a part of the river.

Every man by the study of his inner tendency may tell what is likely to be the final make-up of his character. The true soul may drop into the vortex of self as into a whirlpool, thinking of self, caring for self, planning for self, serving self. Or it may spring heavenward like a fountain, and against the natural tendency maintain a steady and eternal movement toward righteousness and the God of righteousness, delighting in him, turning

away from the lower and ever aspiring after the things that are above.

XVII.

T is an important question, which every man should often ask, and to which he should find true answer: What is the ruling tendency of my nature? What do I most care for? What do I most naturally, easily,

and habitually think about and choose?

All men, even those who are at times extremely sceptical, have now and then a sense of relationship to an invisible, allencompassing spiritual world. One at such a time is not surprised at the thought of intelligences who give secret help in the inward struggles of life. It does not surprise him to be told that temptations to evil and help in righteousness come to him from these invisible sources. He knows full well that he needs help from without. He at times feels almost confident that he is one of the vast multitude of unseen beings, and that his doings are

known by them, and that forces of strength and consolation come to him from or through friendly energies and spiritual allies.

XVIII.

HE study of the inner life becomes the duty of every thoughtful soul. Introspection may sometimes be harmful, but again it is in some

cases indispensable. There are three forms of introspection.

The first is *scientific*. Large service is rendered in these days by the students of what is called "the new psychology," who as psychologists and physiologists investigate normal and morbid conditions and seek to know society the better through the study of the individual.

The immediate object of such self-scrutiny is *educational*. It promotes the habit of attention, which is more difficult when fixed upon one's own self in his interior processes, and all the more valuable when it is at all successful. This

habit cultivates the analytic power; measures one's own intellectual quality; aids in the study of literature; contributes to the better education of the morbid, unfortunate, and vicious representatives of the race; tends to self-culture; broadens the fields of consciousness; and increases their extent and the student's command of them; and there is no process by which one's own soul is so stimulated to self-activity and productiveness.

Self-scrutiny has a religious value. One may thus increase his interest in both ethical and spiritual phenomena, test his personal and religious condition, protect himself, if his work be wisely wrought, against self-deception, develop sympathy with other people, and increase his power to harmonize and discharge the varied duties which his multiplied relations impose. There may be utter selfishness in religious self-examination. This is especially the danger if it be conducted under pressure of fear and superstition or of excessive personal solicitude.

Horace Bushnell in a very able sermon warns against the unprofitable type of religious self-scrutiny. He says that generally "in noting things that pass in us we have only a look at the huddle of their transition." He condemns the man who is "always boring into one's life," who is always trying to "study and cipher over himself"; and he wisely makes appeal in behalf of discrimination, and insists upon prayer to God that His Holy Spirit may examine and reveal us to ourselves.

In self-examination we may detect movements, tendencies, and prevailing forces within us. We may study chains of association by which we are led from step to step through a given mental process. We may learn how our sentiments and moral faculties are affected by both fact and fancy. We may compare personal impressions and experiences with others who, engaging in the same studies, seek to know themselves.

It was the habit of the old Stoic Sextus, as he went to his bed at night, to ask of

himself, "What evil thing have I conquered this day? what vice resisted? or in what way might I have become a better man?" Seneca tells how at night his wife would keep silent while he for a time looked back over the day, calling up his deeds, hiding nothing from himself, remembering the words he had spoken; and he insisted that we should daily compel the soul to give an account of itself. He says: "Anger will cease or become more moderate which knows it will daily have to come before a judge. What then more beautiful than this habit of beating out a whole day? What a sleep is that which furnishes opportunity for such an examination! How tranquil and profound and free when the soul has thus been commended and admonished!" The day has not yet gone by when wise Christians may learn useful lessons from wise pagans.

XIX.

of the inner life transcends the human knowledge of all the days.

Let us inquire concerning him.

Above all teachers concerning the inner life is Jesus Christ; Christ as set forth in the New Testament; not the Christ of Strauss, nor the Christ of Renan, but the Christ reported by his four biographers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and represented by his four apostles, Paul, Peter, James, and John; the exponent of the divine ideal of human character and conduct; his life unique, universal in its adaptation and mission, setting forth the divine attitude toward the human race; the exponent of the inner life possible to humanity,—a life of strength, conflict, peace, purity, and power.

Christ himself is the all and in all of Christianity. His character transcends all characters known to human history. He was a man of matchless purity, wisdom, good sense, good will, reverence, and righteousness. His character, teachings, and influence meet the universal demand in human nature for guidance, for deliverance from all unseen sources of peril, for the attainment of a complete and enduring personal character, and for the realization of a final social order which shall bring the race of man into harmony with God

It is impossible that Jesus Christ should have been either deceived or he himself a deceiver. Therefore all who enter into his spirit, and embrace with consenting will and warmed affections the inner life which he sets forth as possible to men, are ready to accept the supernatural and divine elements which enter into it and can alone explain the amazing results of its presence in human history. The divine element is so inwrought into the texture of the history which reports the human and easily apprehensive part of it that if one goes all goes; and we may say with Luther, "If Jesus be not God, he is not good."

The Christianity in which we believe

accepts the gospel according to John as well as that of the Synoptists. It finds the subjective life of Christ as set forth by this evangelist full of true religious consciousness, charm, and power. sees in the Old Testament a gradual unfolding of the divine ideal and necessarily imperfect, as the apparatus of the kindergarten must be imperfect in the eye of the collegian. But in that old kindergarten system of the tabernacle, with its Shekinah, bending cherubim, enfolding cloud, and hidden fire, there is manifested the God of the race as revealed in the wisdom, mercy, love, life, and power of Christ. Chrysostom says, "The true Shekinah is man." This is the flower and fruit of the whole Christian system—God dwelling and reigning through Christ by his Holy Spirit in the human soul. This is the divine inner life made possible to humanity.

Christ is to the individual the sun of righteousness, the atmosphere, a fountain of living water, a vine holding the branches and supplying them with life and strength, our shepherd, friend, brother, nearer and dearer than brother, sister, father, mother!

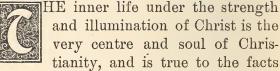
What is the mystical bond that holds child and father together, quickening their heart-beat and joy at their mutual approach? What is the bond between lovers where glances speak volumes, which in absence binds them together in confidence and affection that may be accounted perfect?

XX

S this inner life a reality of human experience?

Christianity sets forth and insists upon the possibilities of an spiritual life, more tender, more true, more positive in its ministrations and inward witnessings than any phenomena of human confidence, affection, and delight. The human soul is thus subject to divine influence direct—spirit upon spirit, life within life.

XXI.



of human nature. The Old and the New Testament characters represent nine-teenth-century human nature with all of its infirmities. We find there the same struggle over righteousness; the same conflict between the two natures revealed in Paul's letter to the Romans; David on one hand a man after God's own heart, and yet left to himself basest of the base. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde represent in fiction facts of human nature set forth with plainest speech in the revelation of God.

Our contention is that the play of the divine life on the inner life transforms, exalts, purifies, glorifies, the human soul, as an honorable lover's love, with its quickening power, character, motives, memory, conscience, and purposes. Said Napoleon's soldier, under the surgeon's

knife, "Probe a little deeper, and you will find the emperor."

The ocean rolls in at high tide into every creek until the marsh is submerged. As Sidney Lanier sings:—

"And the sea lends large, as the marsh. Lo, out of his plenty the sea

Pours fast. Full soon the time of the flood-tide must be:

Look how the grace of the sea doth go About and about through the intricate channels that flow

> Here and there, Everywhere,

Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes,

And the marsh is meshed with a million veins, That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow, In the rose-and-silver evening glow."

We have thus represented in the strongest manner possible to us the positive theory of Christianity, teaching the relation of Christ to the individual soul. We claim what Paul and John claimed concerning the "new creation" effected under the Christian scheme by the Holy Spirit of God. We have accepted what

is called "orthodoxy," and claim for it all that Christ and Paul and Peter and James claimed from the Advent to Pentecost and from Pentecost to the glorious Epiphany on Patmos.

XXII.

HERE is a religious, a Christian consciousness. It is not one thing with the pagan and another thing with the Christian, save in this,

that the cravings of the latter are satisfied with the fulness of the revelation made in Christ. The consciousness of humanity as concerning God and duty, guilt and need, is universal. You find it in heathen lands. You find it in Christian lands. The religious pagan longs after God, and gropes in darkness, albeit there comes to him a measure of strength when his moral nature responds to the best light that is in him. But the response which the Christian receives, as he yields to the voice of revelation interpreted by the Spirit of God, is definite,

distinct, and full of cheer and power. The Christian conscience is full of light. The earnest pagan lives where midnight reigns a large part of the year, where fields of ice form, and desolate mountains frown and verdure is rarely seen; nevertheless, he lives and enjoys life, and loves and is loved, and would rather live than die. But the Christian lives in other zones, where spring comes with its hope, summer with its promise, and autumn with its fulfilment, and where winter, through the munificence of autumn and the confidence in a coming spring, is made more than endurable, even full of delight.

The comprehensive study of the world religions discloses an inter-relation and harmony which give proof of a divine purpose in pagan and partial religious systems as well as in Christianity. But this as the latest and highest of all is completely adapted to the needs of humanity.

If we look with wide and comprehensive vision, we shall see that the various

religious systems have contributed their share toward final perfection. The calmness, stoicism, and submissiveness of one people; the loyalty and righteousness and reverence for Jehovah in another; the culture, the flexibility, the sensitiveness, and refinement of a third; the aggressive and administrative and civilizing power of a fourth, have all centred in the Christianity represented by the Anglo-Saxon, and Christ has been present and potent in all.

There is an inner life, Christian and spiritual, in men who are not wholly what is called evangelical. We find in this school such men as Channing, Martineau, the elder Peabody, to say nothing of representative Unitarians, who still occupy a place in this generation—good men and just, reverent and philanthropic. Through the universal grace of Christ there is a measure of good in every man. Everywhere you will find an ideal, an impulse, a resolve, a regret over failure, and a measure of earnest endeavor. Such men may not make the full response

to what the evangelical believer calls the highest power of Christianity; but what all such men have is Christ,—the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; and whatever diversities of opinion they and we may hold concerning Christ, certainly the Father whom both they and we worship is the Father of Jesus Christ set forth by him in command, in parable, in figure, in conduct, and in life. And God is now being more and more understood by the interpretative power of Jesus himself.

XXIII.

OES our reader remember the picture at the beginning of this booklet,—of landscape, mountain, plain, river, promontory,

boundless sea, veiled with a cloud of mist and darkened with the darkening night, until only one light shone out from the summit of the lofty lighthouse? Do you remember the deeper shadow resting on the face of a troubled man, hanging for forty years over him? Such is human experience without the light of the gospel of Christ.

May we present to you the same landscape, a cloudless sky overarching it, the glorious sun pouring its wealth of light and splendor upon land and sea? The coming night makes little difference; for, instead of one sun, thousands of worlds look down with benediction, reflecting their light in the dancing waves, and the moon in her beauty gilds with silver sheen the world below. The man stands as he stood before. But now everything of the outer world is changed. No external glory could be greater, no breath from the sea more stimulating, no glory of the sun more dazzling. But he still wears that look of anxiety and trouble. Memory does her work as faithfully, and sadness reigns as darkly, when the sun shines as when the clouds cover the sky. The same memory of unworthy motive and dishonorable deed oppresses him. It is not in any gift of landscape nor in any breath wafted over the sea to lift the

cloud of discouragement, lighten the load of guilt, or illuminate with smiles the face that remorse has shadowed.

The outer world has been transformed, but the inner world remains the same. He may lose the vivid apprehension of the reality; but it will be only for a time, and underneath a temporary elation of spirit there will be the undertone of sadness, breaking now and then into a note of despair.

What the outward world cannot do, the declaration of divine pity, sympathy, love, strength, forgiving grace, and renewing power may do. If John Bunyan's Evangelist could come to the man in his desolation, and tell him the story we might all tell him of the patient Christ, the abounding pardon, the measureless love of God, "wider than the wideness of the sea"; if the man could be taken-a poor pilgrim—to the house of the Interpreter, and receive lessons of grace from ministers of mercy, we might then see him stand in the midst of this familiar landscape with bare brow, his face aglow,

in his heart strength of purpose, the love of righteousness, the loathing of evil, the light of hope, and a definite consciousness of harmony with the universe of which he is a part. And whether the mist and the night settle over him, or the glory of the heavens shine upon him, the inner world, being transformed by the infinite love of God, would make outward things of little account, giving brightness even in the darkness, and making brightness brighter because of the clearer light of the eternal day.

This is what Christianity can do for the inner life of men of all races, of all sorts and conditions. This is what Christianity has done for ages where it has been tested. This is what Christianity is doing to-day more widely and more

effectively than ever before.

XXIV.

T would be very interesting to study the inner life of the apostles, who were the immediate successors of Jesus Christ and most of them personally conversant with him while he was on the earth. The study of the inner life of Christ is in itself a subject sufficient to occupy a whole volume. And most interesting would be the study of the life-experience of Christians of every age from the days of St. John to the days of Matthew Simpson, Henry Drummond, and Dwight L. Moody.

Christianity presents a philosophy of subjective experience. Then it says: Trust, test, demonstrate. Believe, and thou shalt be able to know, to do, to be. Open the windows, and the light will come in.

Here is opportunity for experiment. The saints by the ten thousand have made the experiment. It has never once failed.

The essence of religion is the divine

indwelling—God in the individual soul. This religious consciousness any one may have. Of course it is a testimony concerning personal thought, feeling, experience. But this test medical science uses. Even the sceptical physician will ask the patient how he "feels." He puts great stress on the patient's testimony. If he finds that he must discount it for the time being, he nevertheless asks the question again and again, "How do you feel?" He aids the patient by indicating symptoms. But even this depends upon the patient's prompt, emphatic, and intelligent declaration as to a subjective experience corresponding with the physician's suggestions. As normal conditions return to his patient, he continues to ask, "How do you feel?" He listens with, pleasure to his patient's later account of the processes by which the physician wrought the good work of healing, and the same physician who smiles with illdisguised contempt at a Christian's testimony asks permission to record and publish in some medical journal the experiences of the restored invalid. And more than once he sends a marked copy of the testimony as proof of his own skill and success.

XXV.



MIGHTY host of witnesses might be summoned to sustain the claim of Christ to heal the soul of its worst maladies, to give light for

darkness, peace for unrest, love for hate or apathy, life for death.

Names of multitudes forgotten on earth are "writ large" in the house of the King above,—names of slaves, of colliers, of soldiers, of artisans, of miners, of shepherds, of busy housekeepers, of ploughboys and peasants, of people of all sorts and conditions, who, hearing the truth, accepted it, loved it, lived it, and now live the eternal life through faith in Christ. If the representatives of this inner life and experience could now give witness out of the heavens, the glory of their presence would at this moment dazzle our eyes to blindness, the melody of

their voices would ravish our souls, and we should find ourselves surrounded by a great multitude whom no man can number, who are eager everywhere and always to sing of Him who giveth life to the souls of men.

We have spoken of Christian experiences in lowly homes. We recall a sweet and patient child who nearly fifty years ago worked in a New Jersey factory, held family prayer by her non-professing father's consent in their little home, won her mother and her brother to Christ, taught in the Sunday-school, toiled at the loom, belonged to a little country church, and by her simple, fervent, intelligent piety filled the whole community and fills that little church to this day with the sweet perfume of remembered gentleness, purity, and devotion.

Every church has its representatives of this inner, higher, holier life. They may occupy humble places in the public worship. Their voices are heard only now and then in the social meeting. The carriages of the rich never stop at their doors; but they combine to form divine mosaics of personal and social Christian character, which adorn the church of the living God far more beautifully than the most brilliant works of art. We write huge biographies of the renowned saints; but how many lives unwritten on earth are recorded on the immortal pages above! In our library firmament we see a few stars; but what wealth of spiritual beauty shines in the heavens of our history, representing all conditions—poverty, wealth, weakness, power, and all stages of experience—startled apathy, intense anxiety, restful faith, divine peace, and spiritual power!

XXVI.

OW glad we should be to unfold at length some of the lives which Christian literature presents! Take, for example, the absolute faith, the perfect humility, the unruffled calmness, of Zachary Macaulay;

the truth-loving and truth-living of John Duncan, of Scotland, of whom Dr. Campbell says, "He lives in the truth of things." Think of the frank, affectionate, honest, persistent, generous Samuel Budgett, "the successful merchant" whom William Arthur has immortalized, who from behind a grocer's counter rose until as the "great Budgett" he built his warehouses and extended his trade over England and over the seas. On his deathbed he said, "Riches I have had as much as my heart could desire; but I never felt any pleasure in them for their own sake, only so far as they enabled me to give pleasure to others." Again he said to a friend: "I sent for you to tell you how happy I am; not a wave, not a ripple, not a fear, not a shadow of doubt. I did not think it was possible for man to enjoy so much of God upon earth. I am filled with God! I like to hear of the beauties of heaven, but I do not dwell upon them; no, what I rejoice in is this, that Christ will be there. Where he is, there shall I be also. I know that he is

in me and I in him. I shall see him as he is. I delight in knowing that."

Look at Wilberforce, living solely for others, devoting himself to the suppression of the slave-trade and the reformation of manners. He was fascinating in society; but, as Bayne forcibly says, "he escaped from being a character of a sort which is surely one of the most pitiful human life can show,—a fashionable wit and jester." Wilberforce was a diligent, critical, spiritual student of the Word of God. He recognized himself everywhere as a child of God, capable of entering any sphere of public life, shining brilliantly in society, surrendering himself to the service of humanity, and always abiding in the peace of God.

There, too, is John Howard, and after him come Elizabeth Fry and the dear Gurney. What brave, godly, gentle, potent spirits they were! In the midst of his practical ministries in behalf of prisoners, John Howard writes to a friend: "Commune with thy own heart; see what progress thou makest in thy religious journey. Art thou nearer the heavenly Canaan, the vital flame burning clearer and clearer? Or are the concerns of the common engrossing thy knowledge? A little while and the journey shall be ended. Be thou faithful unto death." According to the sweet record of his death, after his intercession for his son and for the afflicted with whom he always sympathized, he said to his old friend Admiral Priestman: "Let me beg of you, as you value your old friend, not to suffer any pomp to be used at my funeral, nor any monument or monumental inscription whatever to mark where I am laid. But lay me quietly in the earth, place a dial over my grave, and let me be forgotten." And then, with a smile of peace, he passed away.

Mrs. Fry, at the end of her life, made this remarkable statement: "I can say one thing; since my heart was touched at seventeen years old, I believe I have never wakened from sleep, in sickness or in health, by day or by night, without my first waking thought being how best I might serve the Lord."

The life of Stephen Grellet was a life filled with inner peace. And John Foster, who as few men knew the agony of doubt, exclaimed in his earlier years, "Oh, what a difficult thing it is to be a Christian! I feel the necessity of reform through all my soul." But within him a lamp was lighted. Earnestness was his peculiar endowment. He felt the awfulness and the reality of life. His manhood was most serious. At the last he spoke of his increasing weakness, and added, "But I can pray, and that is a glorious thing."

There, too, was Frederick W. Robertson, cultivated, consecrated, struggling for years against doubt, clinging through the later years of his life, as he said, to "the one great certainty to which, in the midst of darkest doubt, I never cease to cling, the entire symmetry and loveliness and the unequalled nobleness of the humanity of the Son of man."

Hear that gifted preacher of Brighton

as he prays: "Bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Take what I cannot give,—my heart, body, thought, time, abilities, money, health, strength, nights, days, youth, age, and spend them in thy service, O my crucified Master, Redeemer, God! O let not these be mere words."

There, too, is that delightful circle of cultivated souls, the Hares,-Augustus, Julius, Marcus, Francis. What pictures do "The Memorials of a Quiet Life" bring us of those delightful people, who enjoyed the incidental pleasures of society, but the tone of whose lives came from heaven. As Mrs. Augustus Hare wrote, "What we can do for God is little or nothing, but we must do our little nothing for his glory." She says: "The happy Christian is no enthusiast. He is one of the most reasonable men in the world. Our own frames and feelings may change, but our consolations are based on God's Word, and those who enjoy them can trust for them." Of her death her gifted and beloved nephew wrote: "Though I can tell the words she said, I can never give—no description can—an idea of the unearthly beauty of her face, of her uplifted eyes, of her trembling hands clasped solemnly in prayer or raised in blessing. It was in that last night that in a moment of incomprehensible glory, in which all who were watching seemed carried up with her in spirit to the very gates of God, she seemed to see the heavens opened, and spoke with rapture of a beautiful white dove that floated down toward her."

But time would fail me to tell of all the illustrious souls who have loved and lived, suffered and borne about in their bodies the marks—these marks of patience, grace, and beauty—of the Lord Jesus, and whose names are on earth as well as in heaven.

How ecstatic was the joy of Rutherford! What hunger after righteousness, loathing of sin, exultation of divine holiness and spiritual ravishment in the experience of Robert Murray McCheyne! What spirit of philanthropy, what energy of reform, what saintliness of manhood, in the noted and humble John Woolman! Then there are Madame Guyon, Thomas à Kempis, John Wesley, Carvosso, John Fletcher, the Tennents, Edward Payson—but there is no end to the list!

Do you remember John Bunyan's experience when he said: "If Satan and I ever strived for any word of God in all my life, it was for this food-word of Christ. He at one end and I at the other. O what work we had! He pulled and I pulled; but, God be praised, I overcame him; I got sweetness out of it." At another time he says, "I saw more in the words, 'heirs of God,' than ever I shall be able to express while I live in this world." Again: "I had not sat above two or three minutes but there came bolting in upon me 'an innumerable company of angels,' and with all the twelfth chapter of Hebrews of Mount Zion was set before my eyes, that with joy I told my wife, 'O now I know.' It was a blessed Scripture to me for many days, and through this sentence the Lord led me over and over, and first to this word, and then to that, and showed me wonderful glory in every one of them."

The revelations of the inner life are not so much revelations of new truth as illuminations of the old. As Erskine once wrote: "I have had one revelation; it is now, I am sorry to say, a matter of memory with me. It was not a revelation of anything that was new to me. After it I did not know anything which I did not know before. But it was a joy for which one might bear any sorrow. I felt the power of love, that God is love, that he loved me, that he had spoken to me, that he had broken silence to me."

O, there is an indwelling of Christ in the heart of the believer which is as when water penetrates to every part of a sponge, or the sun pours its light and warmth through our entire bodies, as John Pulsford says, "through and through every muscle, every nerve, every drop of our blood." It is as when the high tide rolls up through the marsh, filling every stream with his presence, that the Spirit of the living God possesses a human soul, and Christ through his Holy Spirit enters, permeates, dominates, the entire personality, and answers the prayer of Tennyson,—

"O for a man to arise in me
That the man that I am may cease to be!"

Paul says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;" justifying Luther's statement, "Should any one knock at my breast and say, 'Who lives here?' I should reply, 'Not Martin Luther, but the Lord Jesus.'"

Maurice declares, "I have been taught by proofs which have overcome all my natural unbelief and despondency, that the Spirit does speak in us and through us." He also speaks of being "a joyful fellow worker with the Holy Spirit, having a dispensation intrusted to me."

A Roman priest, Joseph Roux, exclaims: "Since in possessing you we possess all if we had nothing else, and in

not possessing you we had nothing if we had all the rest, O my God, I will love you, that I may possess you upon earth, and I will possess you, that I may love you one day in heaven."

And Thomas à Kempis: "All the glory and beauty of Christ are manifested within, and there he delights to dwell. His visits are frequent, his condescension amazing, his conversation sweet, his comforts refreshing, and the peace that he brings passeth all understanding."

We might quote whole pages from the writings of the saints of God in all the generations.

XXVII.

ND how true is all this to human nature! Has the reader never said, under the pressure of some anxiety, some sense of incom-

petency, some weariness of spirit, some heavy burden: "I was perfectly wretched;" "All the light went out of my life;" "It seems as if I had a load of lead upon me;" "I could not sleep;" "I wanted to die"?

Again, how often, amidst the comforts of life, there come unutterable raptures, as when a long-absent friend returns, some dear one recovers from severe illness, and despair is driven out that hope may sing her song again!

How often have you listened to the rendering of some fine musical composition, and have said: "I was carried away;" "I never enjoyed anything so much in my life;" "I was so full of joy that my very gladness became oppressive"!

Do you wonder that, when a human soul has submitted to God, and his Holy Spirit has entered to give witness of pardon and sonship and the assurance of eternal fellowship with God,-do you wonder that the human heart will sometimes be too full for utterance?

XXVIII.

OW may we promote a normal inner life? I answer: Let us daily make close, candid, intelligent self-inspection. Let us find the

ruling motive, and condemn and seek to overcome every tendency to selfishness. Let us fix our thought persistently and with strength of purpose on the character and office and words of the Lord Jesus, and rest with confidence in his promise of transforming power. Let us with consenting will open our souls to the free play and dominion of the Holy Spirit of God. Let us study closely and with prayer the Holy Scriptures, especially the testimony therein contained of devout souls who put their trust in God. Let us read habitually the lives of earnest souls who since the days of the apostles in all ages of the church have believed in Christ and have sought to live under his personal guidance. Let us surrender ourselves to the highest at any present

time attainable. If one cannot begin with transfiguration or resurrection, let him begin with righteousness. Let him deal with duty and not with difficulties; exercising wholesome self-restraint; cultivating more and more a sense of personal responsibility for social and political conditions; cultivating the sense of obligation; looking raceward, not wholly heavenward; living the altruistic life; committing one's self in the presence of man to the service of Christ; openly avowing before the world the measure of faith we already have; giving opportunity to the inner life force; listening for the voice that tells of duty; suspending activity to give opportunity in silence for the Spirit of power within; regulating our environment in the interest of personal growth and usefulness; putting ourselves into conditions favorable to the end we seek.

When Carlyle began to write the life of Frederick the Great, he tried to realize all the conditions of Prussian life. He used a desk brought from Germany. His inkstand was from Germany. The paper upon which he wrote was from Germany. The ink he used was from Germany. And the very pictures on the wall were German pictures. Let us seek the Christian environment.

To secure the true inner life, one must cultivate both will power and faith. He must say, "I will believe." He must struggle, as Thomas Erskine said, "to take part with God against himself." He must cultivate and study serenity. He must sing with Bonar, "Calm me, my God, and keep me calm." He must acquire a responsive moral sense, spiritual sensitiveness, and make his religion a thing of every day.

We have often thought we should like to see Thomas à Kempis a trolley-car conductor or a motorman. Why not? The true Christian must think of God, delight in God, live for God, in all things, always,—at the table, in the parlor, in travel, in the study of art and science, in the pursuit of business, in sickness, in death. He must be religious and ra-

tional, following Livingstone's rule, "Fear God and work hard."

He must seek the type of piety defined of Augustus Hare, "To be ardent without affectation, enthusiastic without inconstancy, vigorous without assumption, cheerful without irreverence, equal to all occasions without courting either applause or opposition."

Into this deeper, larger, loftier, nobler life lead each one of us, O Holy Spirit of the Eternal God, through Jesus Christ

our Saviour! Amen.

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